

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 73

By Niceley

A RESOLUTION to honor Jerry Chris Elliott for his meritorious achievements as both a musician and a NASA engineer.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as community and national leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, it takes a unique individual to excel in two very contrasting professions, pursuing both fields with a tenacious drive and an astute attention to detail; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Jerry Chris Elliott, an accomplished entertainer and an elite engineer, who recently retired from the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas; and

WHEREAS, a full member of Nashville's American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), he has more than 174 registered musical compositions to his credit; and

WHEREAS, thriving on the passion he feels for music, Mr. Elliott has entertained audiences for many years as a professional solo guitarist and he is also equally proficient on the American Indian flute, Indian drum, and keyboard synthesizer; his music is described by many as elegant; and

WHEREAS, born of Cherokee parents in Oklahoma, Chris Elliott learned to play the guitar at age seven and credits his mother with being his earliest musical influence; and

WHEREAS, in paying homage to his Osage and Cherokee heritage, he also goes by the name High Eagle; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Elliott, who entertains across the country, has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony in Wisconsin, and the National Symphony Orchestra at the prestigious John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Chris Elliott's music was featured on the soundtrack for the television movie "*Walker, Texas Ranger*" starring Hollywood actor Chuck Norris; and

WHEREAS, he composes songs and instrumentals ranging from country and western to folk and popular ballads; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Elliott's achievements in the music industry are especially grand considering he retired from U.S. Government Civil Service on July 3, 2006, after 41 years of unwavering service to NASA; and

WHEREAS, he started working for NASA in 1966, as an engineer, and subsequently served as a flight controller; and

WHEREAS, Chris Elliott's thirst for knowledge and an ambitious drive, the same characteristics that define him as a talented musician, paved the way for his successful climb up the ranks of the NASA hierarchy; and

WHEREAS, he has held senior management positions in all fields of NASA's operations including spacecraft systems, national and regional counterterrorism, and physical security; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Elliott was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Richard Nixon for his role in helping to return the endangered crew of the Apollo 13 safely back to earth as Trajectory Engineer/Flight Dynamics Retrofire Officer in the Mission Operations Control Room, a job he astutely performed during Apollo Missions nine through sixteen in Earth orbit and lunar missions; and

WHEREAS, the estimable Mr. Elliott has published more than 20 papers, has held special positions in 19 professional and honorary societies, and has been on the receiving end of a lengthy list of honors, awards, and recognition; and

WHEREAS, he was given the Cherokee Nation Medal of Honor for outstanding achievements in science, engineering, and community service; and the Ely S. Parker Award for lifetime accomplishments in science and exemplary community service; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Elliott obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physics from the University of Oklahoma and has since completed postgraduate studies there as well including a Doctoral Dissertation in 1999; and

WHEREAS, he is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Caroline Swann-Elliott; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Elliott for being an exceptionally talented and driven human being and for his dedication and his commitment to the citizens of this nation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend the exemplary achievements of Mr. Jerry Chris Elliott in the fields of science and entertainment and for his overall service to this State and country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.